

NIHILISM AND NOTHINGNESS IN THE PLAY “THE BIRTHDAY PARTY”

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Mohammad Ahashan is a researcher. He studies the pain, negativity, pessimism and rejection rises after war. To study the war-borne negativity he studies the play “The Birthday Party”. This play is written by the Noble Laureate, Harold Pinter. This was the first full-fledged play written by Harold. The play has been classified as a comedy of menace. It has all the elements of craziness, confusion of time and place and ambiguous identity. The two world wars have resulted in a mass destruction of wealth and human lives. It had a great impact on human lives. This play is based on the philosophy of existentialism. According to this theory, the universe and man’s experience in the world are useless and meaningless. All philosophical systems and religion which claim that they can enable man to make sense of the world are delusive and useless.

The play is about Stanley Webber who is a piano player. He lives in a boarding house in an English seaside town. The house is run by Meg and Peter Boles. The play is about a birthday party which turns into a nightmare. Stanley, the protagonist, has isolated himself in an isolated place. He is hiding from the world. He must have done something wrong.

Mohammad states that the life became useless and aimless after World War II. This aimlessness is presented through the characters of the play. The writer of the play has created some light and comic moments. There is a couple in the play named, Meg and Petey. Though they are husband and wife but they are miscommunicated and misunderstood. There seems to have a communication gap between them.

Mohammad says that though the play is set up against the backdrop of World War II, the writer has put some comic element in between. He has created a situation of confusion and mistakes. As Meg and Petey run a boarding house, they must have host a few strangers. Two strangers come to their house to spend a couple of nights. The information of Meg to Petey about these two strangers terrorize Petey. This anonymity was presented in a humorous way. The plays speaks about the thoughts of insecurity goes in the mind of a person. Human minds are tuned to search for security. There will always be some misunderstanding and lack of awareness about each other between two people. There is always a truth in a person’s life which is hidden in the walls of his mind.

Mohammad states in his words in IJELLH paper that “*In The Birthday Party, menace prevails everywhere. There is a mingling of comedy with a perception of danger pervades the whole play and, at times, becomes very conspicuous. For instance, the first act of play opens with amusing dialogues between Meg and Petey, and it is followed by an amusing dialogue between Meg and Stanley. These amusing dialogues continue for several pages but then comes the menace. Meg informs Stanley that two gentlemen are coming to stay in the boarding house*

which terrifies Stanley. The information of the arrival of the two gentlemen gives rise to a strong sense of menace pertaining both to the past and to the present and the future.”

Mohammad further states in his study that we all are surrounded by strangers and unknown people. We all are terrorized by those strangers and have some apprehensions. In the play also this terror intensifies when two strangers appear on the scene. They are Goldberg and McCann. They put all sorts of absurd and meaningless questions. There is no connection between them. These questions make Stanley little uncomfortable and this shows that he has committed some crime and he is hiding something.

Mohammad says that the questions of Goldberg and McCann are symbolic and represent a sense of guilt in Stanley. They are personified as Stanley's own consciousness. In short, we can say that Stanley is fighting with existential anxiety to live in a world where complete security is impossible.

Conclusion: In his Mohammad tries to explore the existential anxiety through the novel. He also throws some light on the consequences of war. Human mind and life gets totally shattered when a war breaks out. People go through a series of psychological disorders. The shock leave them in the state of disorientation. The play showcases the physical and mental damage also using some lighter and comic moment. Mohammad's research conclude that Harold Pinter's plays reveal our state of solitude, nothingness, isolation and nihilism. Nihilism is the state where everything gets nil and life becomes meaningless.

Reference

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